

13 February 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Records Administration Branch

SUBJECT : Vital Records

1. Per your request I will make the following comments on the Vital Records Program.

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2. In reviewing [REDACTED]'s paper on "Improvement of Vital Records Program" I feel Gerry is right. There must be a total program which must include the following three essentials:

- a. Availability of emergency relocation personnel,
- b. Protection and availability of Vital Records, and
- c. Availability of essential emergency facilities.

3. I go along with Gerry in pulling the Vital Records out of the Records Center and putting them into an underground vault. If not at Langley as suggested by Gerry I would then like to see them in an underground vault out of this area altogether.

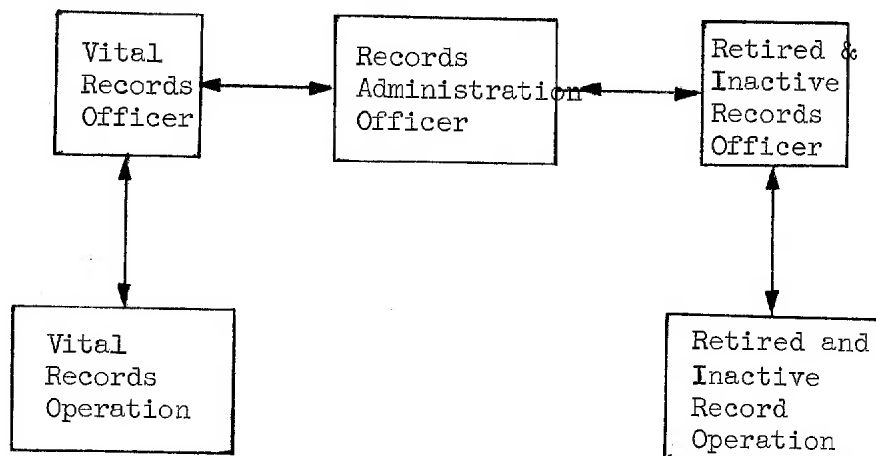
4. Vital Records and Inactive Records are like whiskey and gasoline--they do not mix. They should not be in the Records Center nor under the control of the Records Center personnel. By mixing the two programs it is bad for both programs. Material sent to the Records Center should be the "record copy" of inactive records. Their disposal should be according to their legal and historical value. Vital Records should be an "extra copy" of current records in use. They serve the purpose of "insurance," insurance of our national security, so they must be protected as such.

5. I feel that there should be fewer visitors to the Vital Records Repository and that it could not be necessary for headquarters personnel to come to update the records. These persons are normally grades GS-11 through 13. I also feel that headquarters personnel should be given an inventory on a periodic (monthly) basis. There should be an up-to-date inventory at the Repository at all times in case of an emergency.

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6. Further, I recommend that the Vital Records Program be returned to the same level as the Inactive Records Program. In other words, there should be a person responsible for the Vital Records Program to report to the Vital Records Officer of the Agency the same as the Records Center Program reports to the Records Administration Officer. In this case you (Agency Records Administration Officer) are the Vital Records Officer. I believe that all contacts with Agency components on schedules for both Records Control and Vital Records should be channeled through your Branch at Headquarters. The Chief of the Vital Records Repository should be a person that BELIEVES in the Vital Records Program. He should have at least two persons on his staff. The Vital Records custodian should work closely with Gerry on the program.

7. In other words, to operate in an effective manner the records storage function must be two (2) separate and distinct operations-- Vital Records and Retired or Inactive Records. Implementation of the Vital Records operation will require a staff of three (3) in order to properly service requests and maintain records in a current status. Organizationally the functions and chain of command are set forth below.



8. Please call me to discuss these notes with you.



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GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification